

OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH
PUBLIC ACT SUMMARY



PA 14-196—sSB 203
Committee on Children
Education Committee
Appropriations Committee

AN ACT CONCERNING A STATE-WIDE SEXUAL ABUSE AND ASSAULT AWARENESS PROGRAM

SUMMARY: This act requires, by July 1, 2015, the Department of Children and Families, together with the Department of Education and Connecticut Sexual Assault Crisis Services, Inc., or a similar organization, to identify or develop a statewide sexual abuse and assault awareness and prevention program for use by regional and local school boards. The school boards must implement the program by October 1, 2015.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2014

SEXUAL ABUSE AND ASSAULT AWARENESS PROGRAM

The program must include:

1. instructional modules for teachers,
2. age-appropriate educational materials for students in grades kindergarten through 12, and
3. a uniform child sexual abuse and assault response policy and reporting procedure.

Under the act, the instructional modules may include (1) training on preventing, identifying, and responding to child sexual abuse and assault and (2) resources to further student, teacher, and parental awareness of such abuse and assault and its prevention.

The age-appropriate materials for students may include skills in recognizing (1) child sexual abuse and assault, (2) boundary violations and unwanted forms of touching and contact, and (3) ways offenders groom or desensitize victims. It also may include strategies to (1) promote disclosure, (2) reduce self-blame, and (3) mobilize bystanders.

The response policy and reporting procedure may include:

1. actions child victims may take to get help,
2. intervention and counseling options for these victims,
3. access to educational resources to help victims succeed in school, and
4. uniform procedures for reporting instances of child sexual abuse and assault to school staff.

Exemptions from Program

OLR PUBLIC ACT SUMMARY

The act allows students to opt out of the program or any part of it if the student's parent or legal guardian so notifies the school board in writing. School boards must provide exempt students with opportunities for study or schoolwork when the student would otherwise be participating in the program.

OLR Tracking: PF:JM:JKL:ro